

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS
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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: SOPN, SHUM, GR, CY, TU

SUBJECT: SECRETARY'S HUMAN RIGHTS SPEECH

REFS: (A) STATE 09834, (B) ATHENS 3911

1. WITH THE SEVEN-YEAR JUNTA AS RECENT HISTORY, GREEKS ARE SENSITIZED TO THE SUBJECT OF HUMAN RIGHTS. HOWEVER, MUCH OF THIS CONCERN HAS BEEN CHanneled SINCE THE 1974 INVASION OF CYPRUS BY TURKEY TO CONDEMNING ALLEGED TURKISH HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS ON CYPRUS. FOR INSTANCE, FOREIGN MINISTER BITSIOS HAS REVEALED HIS INTENT TO INTRODUCE THE CASE OF TURKEY AT THE BELGRADE CSCE MEETING THIS SUMMER (REFTEL B). THUS THE GREEK MIND IS QUICK TO LINK TO CYPRUS ANY INTERNATIONAL COMMENTARY OF THE GENERAL TOPIC OF HUMAN RIGHTS. THIS HAS CERTAINLY BEEN THE CASE DURING THE FIRST MONTHS OF THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION WHEN GREEKS HAVE BEEN ESPECIALLY RECEPTIVE TO TATEMENTS BY THE PRESIDENT AND BY OTHER AMERICAN OFFICIALS ON HUMAN RIGHTS, BUT
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WITH A PERHAPS EXAGGERATED EXPECTATION THAT THE US WOULD BRING IMMEDIATE PRESSURE TO BEAR UPON TURKEY FOR THESE PERCEIVED VIOLATIONS.

2. WITH THE ABOVE AS BACKGROUND, THE SECRETARY'S APRIL 30 HUMAN RIGHTS SPEECH WAS NEVERTHELESS PRESENTED BY THE GREEK TV AND RADIO IN A STRAIGHTFORWARD FASHION WITHOUT

COMMENT. AT THE BEGINNING OF THE WEEK (MAY 1-2), RADIO AND TV REPORTING PRESENTED SELECTED EXCERPTS FROM THE SECRETARY'S SPEECH. HOWEVER, BECAUSE OF THE MAY 1 (LABOR DAY) HOLIDAY, THE PRESS DID NOT PUBLISH SUNDAY OR MONDAY. THE NEWSPAPERS REAPPEARED ON TUESDAY, MAY 3, BUT HAVE NOT GIVEN ANY ATTENTION TO DATE TO THE SECRETARY'S SPEECH.

3. WE SENT ADVANCE TEXTS TO THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE AND TO THE MFA, AND MADE A WIDE SUBSEQUENT DISTRIBUTION TO THE MEDIA AND CONTACTS AT ALL LEVELS. WHILE WE HAVE NOT AS YET HAD SPECIFIC FEEDBACK ON THE SECRETARY'S SPEECH, WE HAVE DETECTED IN RECENT CONVERSATIONS WITH GREEKS A GROWING AWARENESS AND ACCEPTANCE THAT HUMAN RIGHTS IS A BASIC TENENT OF US FOREIGN POLICY WHICH WILL PLAY AN INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT ROLE IN AMERICAN DIPLOMACY. HOWEVER, IN THE MAIN GREEKS WILL JUDGE AMERICAN POLICY IN TERMS OF US PERFORMANCE WITH REGARD TO TURKEY. AS RESPECTED KATHIMERINI PUT IT EARLIER THIS WEEK IN A MAIN EDITORIAL, "PRESIDENT CARTER EMPHATICALLY STATED THAT COUNTRIES WHICH DO NOT RESPECT HUMAN RIGHTS WILL RECEIVE NO US AID...WE WILL WAIT TO SEE WHETHER CARTER WILL HONOR HIS STATEMENT IN THE CASE OF TURKEY." AT THE SAME TIME, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF GREECE'S RELATIONS WITH TURKEY, THE GOG HAS SHOWN PRAGMATISM IN USING HUMAN RIGHTS PERFORMANCE AS A STANDARD IN ITS OWN BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH OTHER COUNTRIES.

KUBISCH

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